

# INDIATOBACCAWATCH (ITW) – Newsletter

November 2015

Volume 1

Edition 4

## **HEADLINES OF THE MONTH:**

- ❖ ***Fear that notification on larger pictorial warnings could be an eyewash***
- ❖ ***VAT hike in UP and Maharashtra results in tobacco companies hiking the price of cigarettes***
- ❖ ***J & K government allocates rejuvenation of a central park to Godfrey & Philips***
- ❖ ***Tobacco Institute of India (TII) awards attended by MP's and MLA's in Karnataka***
- ❖ ***Michael Bloomberg says Big Tobacco preys on World's poor***
- ❖ ***Tobacco manufacturer DS group to diversify into other businesses***

### **Fear that notification on larger pictorial warnings could be an eye wash**

Public health experts fear that the notice to delay implementation of 85% pictorial warnings on tobacco products till April 2016 will give enough time for tobacco industry to lobby and dilute the notification. Experts feel that this might just be an eyewash by the government to get time after Rajasthan's High court directive to implement larger pictorial warnings by October 2015.

*Deputy Director of HRIDAY Radhika Shrivastav said "If the health ministry is intent on implementing the expanded warnings, they could do it even before April 2016. It's been about a year since the ministry announced this intention -- so the (tobacco) industry should have been prepared by now"*

### **VAT hike in UP and Maharashtra results in tobacco companies hiking the price of cigarettes**

The recent VAT hike of tobacco products in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra has resulted in major cigarette companies increasing the price of their cigarettes. The prices have increased for premium brands as much as Rs 30 for a 20 pack cigarette and for standard packs of 10 and 20 prices have gone up by Rs 2 and Rs 4 respectively.

## Jammu & Kashmir government allocates rejuvenation of a central park to Godfrey Philips

The state government two months back allocated the task of rejuvenation of centrally located Pratap Park in the commercial hub of Lal Chowk in Srinagar to Godfrey and Philips. The company that reportedly has an annual turnover of around Rs 450 crore manufactures many cigarette brands. Experts and industry observers are of the view that the renovation of the park by a tobacco company would only end up worsening the health landscape in the state as the company would be able to build goodwill among its consumers. The park, which is visited by thousands every day in the central market of the city, is being renovated in collaboration with a valley based NGO – Help foundation – working for the ‘psycho-social and economic development of victims of Kashmir Conflict’.

Senior Program Officer at VHAJ Binoy Mathew says “They should instead be asked to pay their CSR contributions directly to state and central governments for welfare schemes. Regular CSR norms should not cover tobacco industry, as promoting tobacco goods under CSR schemes would harm public health and well-being”

## Tobacco Institute of India (TII) awards attended by MP's and MLA's in Karnataka

Tobacco Institute of India (TII) 16<sup>th</sup> TII Tobacco Farmer's award held in Bengaluru was attended by elected representatives of the state - MP's Dhruvanarayana, Pratap Simha, C.S. Puttaraju and MLA's K Venkatesh, H P Manjunatha, A. Manju. It is known that TII lobbies for cigarette companies at the Centre against strengthening tobacco control policies.

## Michael Bloomberg says Big tobacco preys on World's poor

Michael Bloomberg has laid into the tobacco industry saying ‘they deliberately go out every day and try to kill, for their own profits, the poor around the world.’ He also added ‘the bad news is this year tobacco companies will sell more cigarettes than ever before in history because they sell them to the poor, the people who don't understand what it's doing to their health’.

## Tobacco manufacturer DS group to diversify into other businesses

Tobacco manufacturer DS group to diversify into dairy, food, beverages and hospitality sector forced by regulatory curbs on tobacco. The company is also pushing confectionary products under the Pass Pass brand name in a bid to widen its appeal. The spokesperson said chewing gums and candies were recently launched as part of this endeavour.

**IndiaTobaccoWatch (ITW)** is an initiative by organizations working in tobacco control across India to monitor the activities of tobacco industry. Spread the word.

VISIT US TO SUBSCRIBE FOR LATEST UPDATES AT: [www.indiatobaccowatch.org](http://www.indiatobaccowatch.org)



[https://www.facebook.com/pages/IndiaTobaccoWatch/1629660567265259?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/pages/IndiaTobaccoWatch/1629660567265259?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)



<https://twitter.com/IndTobaccoWatch>